

that we can get on with something that is definite, something that concerns the future of the country instead of the past.

Mr. Speaker, may I call it six o'clock?

At six o'clock the house took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The house resumed at 8 p.m.

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, before we adjourned at six o'clock I had stated why we believe that an election at this time is not really a good thing. I will not repeat the reasons for that belief, but I would say this. We have waited for a long time for the government really to get moving in providing the necessary legislative action to meet the needs of our country at this time. We have had a number of resolutions which have not been acted upon. We have much legislation from previous parliaments that we have heard talked about in the speech from the throne, and on different occasions, but we see no program that is actually going to bring this in at the present time. We have all realized, I think, that our parliament is completely out of tune with the fiscal year of the government's administration. Again, this is why we find ourselves in a position without even an interim supply to meet the needs of the government, and we find ourselves crowding in with much haste the estimates from last year and with supply motions for money which has practically all been spent.

For these and other reasons we have reached the point, that we almost reluctantly, shall we say, believe it would be worse for the country in not going to the people to ascertain their will than it would be to prolong the life of this government which is not fulfilling its responsibilities as it should.

We in our party have done all we can towards assisting the bringing in of this legislation. In fact, we have gone the second and the third mile. Last week we made it very clear both in the press and in private discussion that if we could have assurance that the estimates for the new year could be brought down in two weeks and that the budget could be brought down within a reasonable time, we would support the estimates for last year and also the supply motions. To prove this point, when we heard this morning of the resignation of the defence minister we met in caucus, and at one o'clock or a few minutes prior to one o'clock we issued another statement, and if the government had wanted, they could certainly have met the simple things for which we asked. We

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believe our request was a reasonable request. I believe that we were elected to parliament to see that Canada gets good government. We are trying to carry out our responsibilities, and this was simply a request along that line. At this moment I should like to read what this statement said:

Social Credit has taken the position since the June 18 election that parliament must serve the interests of Canada.

The Social Credit party announced at the beginning of this session that it was the duty of all members of parliament from all parties to proceed with their responsibilities.

Those responsibilities are to provide the government with authority and money to carry on the public affairs of the nation, giving the largest minority the opportunity to govern. We have continuously followed this policy until this time. It must, however, be recognized that this policy is, and was, based on the premise that the government would provide clearcut statement of policy and an appropriate follow up on legislation which has been passed by this parliament and past parliaments.

We are deeply concerned about the events of the past few days and the reasons that give rise to these events. The statement of the United States state department and the resignation of the minister of national defence are two striking examples resulting from the confusion, indecision and postponement of government policy. This confusion, indecision and postponement are not confined to matters of national defence alone. An election in Canada precipitated by the events of the last three days, with an anti-American over-tone, would be a tragedy. The United States is our nearest neighbour and closest friend and only damage could result from an election campaign on this basis.

In considering all that has happened during these last tense days, we would continue to stand on our previous policy which would permit the passage of the necessary supply motions and last year's estimates in order that the new estimates and the current budget could be brought down, if the government would:

1. Provide a clearcut statement of defence policy.

This afternoon we heard the resignation of the minister of national defence, but no explanation whatsoever from the Prime Minister of what the policy of the government was, now that the minister of defence had resigned for the reasons he so clearly stated. We also asked that the government agree to bring in the new estimates within two weeks. That is a reasonable request. Third, we also asked that the new budget be brought down within four weeks and that there would be an opportunity for a full budget debate assured. We asked, in the fourth instance, that the government outline a positive program of follow-up action respecting many things for which parliament has already given authority.

We did not intend to issue an ultimatum. We merely stated these points believing that they were reasonable, and were things that the government was expected to deal with not only by this house but also by the people of Canada. In spite of that last minute appeal